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ADDRESS

DELIVERED AT THE COMPLETION

OF THE

BUNKER HILL MONUMENT,

JUNE 17, 1843.

By DANIEL WEBSTER.

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DELIVERED AT THE COMPLETION OF THE BUNKER HILL MONUMENT, JUNE 17, 1843.

A DUTY has been performed. A work of gratitude and patriotism is completed. This structure, having its foundations in soil, which drank deep of early revolutionary blood, has at length reached its destined height, and now lifts its summit to the skies.

We have assembled to celebrate the accomplishment of this undertaking, and to indulge, afresh, in the recollection of the great event, which it is designed to commemorate. Eighteen years, more than half the ordinary duration of a generation of mankind, have elapsed, since the corner stone of this monument was laid. The hopes of its projectors rested on voluntary contributions, private munificence, and the general favor of the public. These hopes have not been disappointed. Donations have been made by individuals, in some cases of large amount, and smaller sums contributed by thousands. All who regard the object itself as important, and its accomplishment, therefore, as a good attained, will entertain sincere respect and gratitude for the unwearied efforts of the successive Presidents, Boards of Directors, and Committees of the Association, which has had the general control of the work. The Architect, equally entitled to our thanks and commendation, will find other reward, also, for his labor and skill, in the beauty and elegance of the obelisk itself, and the distinction which, as a work of art, it confers on him.

At a period when the prospects of further progress in the undertaking were gloomy and discouraging, the Mechanic Association, by a most praiseworthy and vigorous effort, raised new funds for carrying it forward, and saw them applied with fidelity, economy and skill. It is a grateful duty to make public acknowledgments of such timely and efficient aid.

The last effort, and the last contribution, were from a different source. Garlands of grace and elegance were destined to crown a work, which had its commencement in manly patriotism. The

winning power of the sex addressed itself to the public, and all that was needed to carry the monument to its proposed height, and give to it its finish, was promptly supplied. The mothers and the daughters of the land contributed thus, most successfully to whatever of beauty is in the obelisk itself, or whatever of utility and public benefit and gratification in its completion.

Of those, with whom the plan of erecting on this spot a monument, worthy of the event to be commemorated, originated, many are now present ; but others, alas ! have themselves become subjects of monumental inscription. William Tudor, an accomplished scholar, a distinguished writer, a most amiable man, allied, both by birth and sentiment, to the patriots of the Revolution, died, while on public service abroad, and now lies buried in a foreign land. William Sullivan, a name fragrant of Revolutionary merit, and of public service and public virtue, who himself partook, in a high degree, of the respect and confidence of the community, and yet was always most loved where best known, has also been gathered to his fathers. And last, George Blake, a lawyer of learning and eloquence, a man of wit and of talent, of social qualities the most agreeable and fascinating, and of gifts which enabled him to exercise large sway over public assemblies, has closed his human career. I know that in the crowds before me, there are those, from whose eyes copious tears will flow, at the mention of these names. But such mention is due to their general character, their public and private virtues, and especially on this occasion, to the spirit and zeal, with which they entered into the undertaking, which is now completed.

I have spoken only of those who are not now numbered with the living. But a long life, now drawing towards its close, always distinguished by acts of public spirit, humanity, and charity, forming a character, which has already become historical, and sanctified by public regard, and by the affection of friends, may confer, even on the living, the proper immunity of the dead, and be the fit subject of honorable mention, and warm commendation. Of the early projectors of the design of this monument, one of the most prominent, the most zealous, and the most efficient, is Thomas H. Perkins. It was beneath his ever hospitable roof that those whom I have mentioned, and others yet living and now present, having assembled for the purpose, adopted the first step towards erecting a monument on Bunker Hill. Long may he remain, with unimpaired faculties, in the wide field of his usefulness. His charities have distilled, like the dews of heaven ; he has fed the hungry, and clothed the naked ; he has given sight to the blind ; and for such virtues there is a reward on high, of which all human memorials, all language of brass and stone, are but humble types and attempted imitations.

Time and nature have had their course, in diminishing the number of those whom we met here on the 17th of June, 1825. Most of the revolutionary characters then present have since deceased, and Lafayette sleeps in his native land. Yet the name and blood

of Warren are with us ; the kindred of Putnam are also here ; and near me, universally beloved for his character and his virtues, and now venerable for his years, sits the son of the noble-hearted and daring Prescott. Gideon Foster of Danvers, Enos Reynolds of Boxford, Phineas Johnson, Robert Andrews, Elijah Dresser, Josiah Cleaveland, Jesse Smith, Philip Bagley, Needham Maynard, Roger Plaisted, Joseph Stephens, Nehemiah Porter, and James Harvey, who bore arms for their country, either at Concord and Lexington, on the 19th of April, or on Bunker Hill, all now far advanced in age, have come here to-day, to look once more on the field of the exercise of their valor, and to receive a hearty outpouring of our respect.

They have long outlived the troubles and dangers of the Revolution ; they have outlived the evils arising from the want of a united and efficient Government ; they have outlived the pendency of imminent dangers to the public liberty ; they have outlived nearly all their contemporaries ; but they have not outlived—they cannot outlive—the affectionate gratitude of their country. Heaven has not allotted to this generation an opportunity of rendering high services, and manifesting strong personal devotion, such as they rendered and manifested, and in such a cause as roused the patriotic fires of their youthful breasts, and nerved the strength of their arms. But we may praise what we cannot equal, and celebrate actions which we were not born to perform. *Pulchrum est benefacere rei-publicæ, etiam bene dicere haud absurdum est.*

The Bunker Hill Monument is finished. Here it stands. Fortunate in the natural eminence on which it is placed — higher, infinitely higher in its objects and purpose, it rises over the land, and over the sea, and visible, at their homes, to three hundred thousand citizens of Massachusetts, — it stands, a memorial of the last, and a monitor to the present, and all succeeding generations. I have spoken of the loftiness of its purpose. If it had been without any other design than the creation of a work of art, the granite, of which it is composed, would have slept in its native bed. It has a purpose ; and that purpose gives it character. That purpose endows it with dignity and moral grandeur. That well known purpose it is, which causes us to look up to it with a feeling of awe. It is itself the orator of this occasion, it is not from my lips, it is not from any human lips, that that strain of eloquence is this day to flow, most competent to move and excite the vast multitudes around. The potent speaker stands motionless before them. It is a plain shaft. It bears no inscriptions, fronting to the rising sun, from which the future antiquarian shall wipe the dust. Nor does the rising sun cause tones of music to issue from its summit. But at the rising of the sun, and at the setting of the sun, in the blaze of noon-day, and beneath the milder effulgence of lunar light, it looks, it speaks, it acts, to the full comprehension of every American mind, and the awakening of glowing enthusiasm in every American heart. Its silent, but awful utterance ; its deep pathos, as it brings to our contemplation the 17th of June, 1775, and the conse-

quences which have resulted to us, to our country, and to the world, from the events of that day, and which we know must continue to rain influence on the destinies of mankind, to the end of time ; the elevation with which it raises us high above the ordinary feelings of life, surpass all that the study of the closet, or even the inspiration of genius can produce. To-day, it speaks to us. Its future auditories will be through successive generations of men, as they rise up before it, and gather round it. Its speech will be of patriotism and courage ; of civil and religious liberty ; of free government ; of the moral improvement and elevation of mankind ; and of the immortal memory of those who with heroic devotion have sacrificed their lives for their country.

In the older world, numerous fabrics still exist, reared by human hands, but whose object has been lost, in the darkness of ages. They are now monuments of nothing, but the labor and skill, which constructed them.

The mighty pyramid itself, half buried in the sands of Africa, has nothing to bring down and report to us, but the power of kings and the servitude of the people. If it had any purpose beyond that of a mausoleum, such purpose has perished from history, and from tradition. If asked for its moral object, its admonition, its sentiment, its instruction to mankind, or any high end in its erection, it is silent—silent as the millions which lie in the dust at its base, and in the catacombs which surround it. Without a just moral object, therefore, made known to man, though raised against the skies, it excites only conviction of power, mixed with strange wonder. But if the civilization of the present race of men, founded as it is, in solid science, the true knowledge of nature, and vast discoveries in art, and which is stimulated and purified by moral sentiment, and by the truths of Christianity, be not destined to destruction, before the final termination of human existence on earth, the object and purpose of this edifice will be known, till that hour shall come. And even if civilization should be subverted, and the truths of the Christian Religion obscured by a new deluge of barbarism, the memory of Bunker Hill and the American Revolution will still be elements and parts of the knowledge, which shall be possessed by the last man, to whom the light of civilization and Christianity shall be extended.

This celebration is honored by the presence of the Chief Executive Magistrate of the Union. An occasion so National in its object and character, and so much connected with that Revolution, from which the Government sprang, at the head of which he is placed, may well receive from him this mark of attention and respect. Well acquainted with Yorktown, the scene of the last great military struggle of the Revolution, his eye now surveys the field of Bunker Hill, the theatre of the first of these important conflicts. He sees where Warren fell, where Putnam and Prescott and Stark and Knowlton and Brooks fought. He beholds the spot, where a thousand trained soldiers of England were smitten to the earth, in the first effort of Revolutionary war, by the arm of a bold and deter-

mined yeomanry, contending for liberty and their country. And while all assembled here entertain towards him sincere personal good wishes, and the high respect due to his elevated office and station, it is not to be doubted, that he enters, with true American feeling, into the patriotic enthusiasm, kindled by the occasion, which animates the millions which surround him.

His Excellency, the Governor of the Commonwealth, the Governor of Rhode Island, and the other distinguished public men, whom we have the honor to receive as visitors and guests, to-day, will cordially unite in a celebration connected with the great event of the Revolutionary war.

No name in the history of 1775 and 1776 is more distinguished than that of an ex-President of the United States, whom we expected to see here, but whose ill health prevents his attendance. Whenever popular rights were to be asserted, an Adams was present; and when the time came, for the formal Declaration of Independence, it was the voice of an Adams, that shook the Halls of Congress. We wish we could have welcomed to us, this day, the inheritor of Revolutionary blood, and the just and worthy Representative of high Revolutionary names, merit and services.

Banners and badges, processions and flags, announce to us, that amidst this uncounted multitude are thousands of natives of New England, now residents in other States. Welcome, ye kindred names, with kindred blood! From the broad savannas of the South, from the newer regions of the West, from amidst the hundreds of thousands of men of Eastern origin, who cultivate the rich valley of the Genesee, or live along the chain of the Lakes, from the mountains of Pennsylvania, and the thronged cities of the coast, welcome, welcome! Wherever else you may be strangers, here you are all at home. You assemble at this shrine of liberty, near the family altars, at which your earliest devotions were paid to Heaven; near to the temples of worship, first entered by you, and near to the schools and colleges, in which your education was received. You come hither with a glorious ancestry of Liberty. You bring names, which are on the rolls of Lexington, Concord and Bunker Hill. You come, some of you, once more to be embraced by an aged Revolutionary father, or to receive another, perhaps, a last blessing, bestowed in love and tears, by a mother, yet surviving to witness, and to enjoy, your prosperity and happiness.

But if family associations and the recollections of the past, bring you hither with greater alacrity, and mingle with your greeting much of local attachment, and private affection, greeting also be given, free and hearty greeting, to every American citizen who treads this sacred soil with patriotic feeling, and respires with pleasure in an atmosphere fragrant with the recollections of 1775. This occasion is respectable—nay, it is grand, it is sublime, by the nationality of its sentiment. In the seventeen millions of happy people, who form the American community, there is not one who has not an interest in this Monument, as there is not one that has not a deep and abiding interest in that which it commemorates.

Woe betide the man, who brings to this day's worship feeling less than wholly American! Woe betide the man, who can stand here with the fires of local resentments burning, or the purpose of fomenting local jealousies, and the strifes of local interests, festering and rankling in his heart. Union, founded in justice, in patriotism, and the most plain and obvious common interest; union, founded on the same love of liberty, cemented by blood shed in the same common cause; union has been the source of all our glory and greatness thus far, and is the ground of all our highest hopes. This column stands on Union. I know not that it might not keep its position, if the American Union, in the mad conflict of human passions, and in the strife of parties and factions, should be broken up and destroyed. I know not that it would totter and fall to the earth, and mingle its fragments with the fragments of Liberty and the Constitution, when State should be separated from State, and faction and dismemberment obliterate forever all the hopes of the founders of our Republic, and the great inheritance of their children. It might stand. But who, from beneath the weight of mortification and shame, that would oppress him, could look up, to behold it? For my part, should I live to such a time, I shall avert my eyes from it forever.

It is not as a mere military encounter of hostile armies, that the battle of Bunker Hill founds its principal claim to attention. Yet, even as a mere battle, there were circumstances attending it, extraordinary in character and entitling it to peculiar distinction. It was fought on this eminence; in the neighborhood of yonder city; in the presence of more spectators than there were combatants in the conflict. Men, women and children, from every commanding position, were gazing at the battle and looking for its result with all the eagerness natural to those who knew that the issue was fraught with the deepest consequences to them. Yet, on the sixteenth of June, 1775, there was nothing around this hill but verdure and culture. There was, indeed, the note of awful preparation in Boston. There was the provincial army at Cambridge with its right flank resting on Dorchester, and its left on Chelsea. But here all was peace. Tranquillity reigned around.

On the seventeenth every thing was changed. On yonder height had arisen, in the night, a redoubt in which Prescott commanded. Perceived by the enemy at dawn, it was immediately cannonaded from the floating batteries in the river, and the opposite shore. And then ensued the hurry of preparation in Boston, and soon the troops of Britain embarked in the attempt to dislodge the colonists.

I suppose it would be difficult, in a military point of view, to ascribe to the leaders on either side, any just motive for the conflict which followed. On the one hand it could not have been very important to the Americans to attempt to hem the British within the town by advancing one single post a quarter of a mile; while on the other hand, if the British found it essential to dislodge the American troops, they had it in their power, at no expense of life. By moving up their ships and batteries, they could have completely

cut off all communication with the main land over the neck, and the forces in the redoubt would have been reduced to a state of famine in forty-eight hours.

But that was not the day for any such considerations on either side! Both parties were anxious to try the strength of their arms. The pride of England would not permit the rebels, as she termed them, to defy her to the teeth, and without for a moment calculating the cost, the British General determined to destroy the fort immediately. On the other side, Prescott and his gallant followers longed and thirsted for a conflict. They wished it, and wished it at once. And this is the true secret of the movements on this hill.

I will not attempt to describe the battle. The cannonading — the landing of the British — their advance — the coolness with which the charge was met — the repulse — the second attack — the second repulse — the burning of Charlestown — and finally the closing assault, and the slow retreat of the Americans — the history of all these is familiar.

But the consequences of the battle of Bunker Hill are greater than those of any conflict between the hostile armies of European powers. It was the first great battle of the Revolution; and not only the first blow, but the blow which determined the contest. It did not, indeed, put an end to the war, but in the then existing hostile state of feeling, the difficulties could only be referred to the arbitration of the sword. And one thing is certain; that after the New England troops had shown themselves able to face and repulse the regulars, it was decided that peace never could be established but upon the basis of the Independence of the colonies. When the sun of that day went down, the event of independence was certain! When Washington heard of the battle he inquired if the militia had stood the fire of the regulars? And when told that they had not only stood that fire, but reserved their own till the enemy was within eight rods, and then poured it in with tremendous effect — “then,” exclaimed he, “the liberties of the country are safe!”

The consequences of this battle were just of the same importance as the Revolution itself.

If there was nothing of value in the principles of the American Revolution, then there is nothing valuable in the battle of Bunker Hill and its consequences. But if the Revolution was an era in the history of man, favorable to human happiness — if it was an event which marked the progress of man, all over the world, from despotism to liberty — then this monument is not raised without cause. Then, the battle of Bunker Hill is not an event undeserving celebrations, commemorations and rejoicings.

What then is the true and peculiar principle of the American Revolution, and of the systems of government which it has confirmed and established? Now the truth is, that the American Revolution was not caused by the instantaneous discovery of principles of government before unheard of, or the practicable adoption

of political ideas, such as had never before entered into the minds of men. It was but the full development of principles of government, forms of society, and political sentiments, the origin of all which lay back two centuries in English and American history.

The discovery of America, its colonization by the nations of Europe, the history and progress of the colonies, from their establishment, to the time when the principal of them threw off their allegiance to the respective States which had planted them, and founded governments of their own, constitute one of the most interesting trains of events in human annals. These events occupied three hundred years ; during which period civilization and knowledge made steady progress in the old world ; so that Europe, at the commencement of the nineteenth century, had become greatly changed from that Europe which began the colonization of America at the commencement of the fifteenth. And what is most material to my present purpose is, that in the progress of the first of these centuries, that is to say, from the discovery of America to the settlements of Virginia and Massachusetts, political and religious events took place, which most materially affected the state of society, and the sentiments of mankind, especially in England, and in parts of Continental Europe. After a few feeble and unsuccessful efforts by England, under Henry the Seventh, to plant colonies in America, no designs of that kind were prosecuted for a long period, either by the English government, or any of its subjects. Without inquiring into the causes of this long delay, its consequences are sufficiently clear and striking. England in this lapse of a century, unknown to herself but under the Providence of God, and the influence of events, was fitting herself for the work of colonizing North America, on such principles, and by such men, as should spread the English name and English blood, in time, over a great portion of the Western hemisphere. The commercial spirit was greatly encouraged by several laws passed in Henry the Seventh's reign ; and in the same reign encouragement was given to arts and manufactures in the Eastern countries, and some not unimportant modifications of the Feudal system, by allowing the breaking of entails. These, and other measures, and other occurrences, were making way for a new class of society to emerge, and show itself in a military and feudal age. A middle class, neither Barons nor great landholders on the one side, nor the mere retainers of the Crown, nor Barons nor mere agricultural laborers on the other. With the rise and growth of this new class of society, not only did commerce and the arts increase, but better education, a greater degree of knowledge, juster notions of the true ends of government, and sentiments favorable to civil liberty, began to spread abroad, and become more and more common. But the plants springing from these seeds, were of slow growth. The character of English society had indeed begun to undergo a change ; but changes of national character are ordinarily the work of time. Operative causes were, however, evidently in existence, and sure to produce, ultimately, their proper effect. From the accession of

Henry Seventh, to the breaking out of the civil wars, England enjoyed much more exemption from war, foreign and domestic, than for a long period before, and during the controversy between the houses of York and Lancaster. These years of peace were favorable to commerce and the arts. Commerce and the arts augmented general and individual knowledge; and knowledge is the only first fountain, both of the love, and the principles of human liberty. Other powerful causes soon came into active play. The reformation of Luther broke out, kindling up the minds of men afresh, leading to new habits of thought, and awakening in individuals energies before unknown even to themselves. The religious controversies of this period changed society as well as religion; indeed, it would be easy to prove, if this occasion were proper for it, that they changed society to a considerable extent, where they did not change the religion of the State. The spirit of commercial and foreign adventure, therefore, on the one hand, which had gained so much strength and influence, since the time of the discovery of America, and, on the other, the assertion and maintenance of religious liberty, having their source indeed in the Reformation, but continued, diversified, and continually strengthened by the subsequent divisions of sentiment and opinion among the reformers themselves, and this love of religious liberty drawing after them, or bringing along with them, as they always do, an ardent devotion to the principle of civil liberty, were the powerful influences, under which character was formed, and men trained for the great work of introducing English civilization, English law, and what is more than all, Anglo-Saxon blood, into the wilderness of North America. Raleigh and his companions may be considered as the creatures, principally, of the first of these causes.* High-spirited, full of the love of personal adventure, excited too, in some degree, by the hopes of sudden riches from the discovery of mines of the precious metals, and not unwilling to diversify the labors of settling a colony with occasional cruising against the Spaniards in the West Indian seas, they crossed and recrossed the ocean, with a frequency which surprizes us, when we consider the state of navigation, and which evinces a most daring spirit. The other cause peopled New England. The May-Flower sought our shores under no high-wrought spirit of commercial adventure, no love of gold, no mixture of purpose, warlike or hostile, to any human being. Like the dove from the ark, she had put forth only to find rest. Solemn prayers from the shores of the sea in Holland, had invoked for her, at her departure, the blessings of Providence. The stars which guided her were the unobscured constellations of civil and religious liberty. Her deck was the altar of the living God. Fervent prayers from bended knees, mingled, morning and evening, with the voices of ocean, and the sighing of the wind in her shrouds. Every prosperous breeze, which, gently swelling her sails, helped the Pilgrims onward in their course, awoke new anthems of praise; and when the elements were wrought into fury, neither the tempest, tossing their fragile bark like a feather, nor the darkness and howling of the

midnight storm, ever disturbed, in man or woman, the firm and settled purpose of their souls, to undergo all, and to do all, that the meekest patience, the boldest resolution, and the highest trust in God, could enable human beings to suffer or to perform.

Some differences may, doubtless be traced at this day, between the descendants of the early colonists of Virginia and those of New England, owing to the different influences and different circumstances under which the respective settlements were made. But only enough to create a pleasing variety in the midst of a general resemblance.

“ ——— *facies, non omnibus una,
“ Nec diversa tamen, qualem decet esse sororem.*”

But the habits, sentiments, and objects of both, soon became modified by local causes, growing out of their condition in the New World; and as this condition was essentially alike in both, and as both at once adopted the same general rules and principles of English jurisprudence, these differences gradually diminished. They gradually disappeared by the progress of time, and the influence of intercourse. The necessity of some degree of union and coöperation to defend themselves against the savage tribes, tended to excite in them mutual respect and regard. They fought together in the wars against France. The great and common cause of the Revolution bound them together by new links of brotherhood; and finally, fortunately, happily, and gloriously, the present form of government united them to form the Great Republic of the World, and bound up their interest and fortunes, till the whole earth sees that there is now for them, in present possession, as well as future hope, only “One Country, One Constitution, and One Destiny.”

The colonization of the tropical region, and the whole of the Southern parts of the Continent, by Spain and Portugal, was conducted on other principles, under the influence of other motives, and followed by far different consequences. From the time of its discovery, the Spanish Government pushed forward its settlements in America, not only with vigor, but with eagerness; so that long before the first permanent English settlement had been accomplished, in what is now the United States, Spain had conquered Mexico, Peru, and Chili; and stretched her power over nearly all the territory she ever acquired in this continent. The rapidity of these conquests is to be ascribed in a great degree, to the eagerness, not to say the rapacity of those numerous bands of adventurers who were stimulated to subdue immense regions, and take possession of them in the name of the crown of Spain. The mines of gold and silver were the excitements to these efforts, and accordingly settlements were generally made, and Spanish authority established on the immediate eve of the subjugation of territory, that the native population might be set to work by their new Spanish masters, in the mines. From these facts, the love of gold — gold not produced by industry, nor accumulated by commerce, but gold dug from its native bed in the bowels of the earth, and that earth rav-

ished from its rightful possessors by every possible degree of enormity, cruelty, and crime, was long the governing passion in Spanish wars, and Spanish settlements, in America. Even Columbus himself did not wholly escape the influence of this base motive. In his early voyages we find him passing from island to island, inquiring everywhere for gold ; as if God had opened the new world to the knowledge of the old, only to gratify a passion equally senseless and sordid ; and to offer up millions of an unoffending race of men to the destruction of the sword, sharpened both by cruelty and rapacity. And yet Columbus was far above his age and country. Enthusiastic, indeed, but sober, religious, and magnanimous ; born to great things and capable of high sentiments, as his noble discourse before Ferdinand and Isabella, as well as the whole history of his life, shows. Probably he sacrificed much to the known sentiments of others, and addressed to his followers motives likely to influence them. At the same time it is evident that he himself looked upon the world which he discovered as a world of wealth, all ready to be seized and enjoyed.

The conquerors and the European settlers of Spanish America were mainly military commanders and common soldiers. The monarchy of Spain was not transferred to this hemisphere, but it acted in it, as it acted at home, through its ordinary means, and its true representative, military force. The robbery and destruction of the native race was the achievement of standing armies, in the right of the king, and by his authority ; fighting in his name, for the aggrandizement of his power, and the extension of his prerogatives ; with military ideas under arbitrary maxims, a portion of that dreadful instrumentality by which a perfect despotism governs a people. As there was no liberty in Spain, how could liberty be transmitted to Spanish colonies ?

The colonists of English America were of the people, and a people already free. They were of the middle, industrious, and already prosperous class, the inhabitants of commercial and manufacturing cities, among whom liberty first revived and respired, after a sleep of a thousand years in the bosom of the dark ages. Spain descended on the new world in the armed and terrible image of her monarchy and her soldiery ; England approached it in the winning and popular garb of personal rights, public protection and civil freedom. England transplanted liberty to America ; Spain transplanted power. England, through the agency of private companies, and the efforts of individuals, colonized this part of North America, by industrious individuals, making their own way in the wilderness, defending themselves against the savages, recognising their right to the soil, and with a general honest purpose of introducing knowledge as well as Christianity among them. Spain stooped on South America, like a falcon on its prey. Everything was gone. Territories were acquired, by fire and sword. Cities were destroyed by fire and sword. Hundreds of thousands of human beings fell by fire and sword. Even conversion to Christianity was attempted by fire and sword.

Behold, then, fellow-citizens, the difference resulting from the operation of the two principles! Here, to-day, on the summit of Bunker Hill, and at the foot of the monument, behold the difference! I would, that the fifty thousand voices present could proclaim it, with a shout which should be heard over the globe. Our inheritance was of liberty, secured and regulated by law, and enlightened by religion and knowledge; that of South-America was of power, stern, unrelenting, tyrannical, military power. And look to the results, on the general and aggregate happiness of the human race. And behold the results, in all the regions conquered by Cortez and Pizarro, and the contrasted results here. I suppose the territory of the United States may amount to one eighth or one tenth of that colonized by Spain on this continent, and yet in all that vast region there are but between one and two millions of European color and European blood; while in the United States there are fourteen millions who rejoice in their descent from the people of the more northern part of Europe.

But we follow the difference, in the original principle of colonization, and in its character and objects, still further. We must look to moral and intellectual results; we must consider consequences, not only as they show themselves in the greater or less multiplication of men or the supply of their physical wants — but in their civilization, improvement and happiness we must inquire what progress has been made in the true science of liberty, and in the knowledge of the great principles of self-government.

- I would not willingly say anything on this occasion, discourteous to the new governments, founded on the demolition of the power of the Spanish monarchy. They are yet on their trial, and I hope for a favorable result. But truth, sacred truth, and fidelity to the cause of civil liberty, compels me to say, that hitherto they have discovered quite too much of the spirit of that monarchy, from which they separated themselves. Quite too frequent resort is made to military force; and quite too much of the substance of the people consumed, in maintaining armies, not for defence against foreign aggression only, but for enforcing obedience to domestic authority. Standing armies are the oppressive instruments for governing the people, in the hands of hereditary and arbitrary monarchs. A military republic, a government founded on mock elections, and supported only by the sword, is a movement indeed, but a retrograde and disastrous movement, from the monarchical systems. If men would enjoy the blessings of Republican government, they must govern themselves by reason, by mutual counsel and consultation, by a sense and feeling of general interest, and by the acquiescence of the minority in the will of the majority, properly expressed; and above all, the military must be kept, according to the language of our bill of rights, in strict subordination to the civil authority. Wherever this lesson is not both learned and practised, there can be no political freedom. Absurd, preposterous is it — a scoff and a satire on free forms of constitutional liberty, for constitutions and frames of government to be prescribed by military lead-

ers, and the right of suffrage to be exercised at the point of the sword.

Making all allowance for situation and climate, it cannot be doubted by intelligent minds, that the difference now existing between North and South America is justly attributable, in a degree, to political institutions. And how broad that difference is! Suppose an assembly, in one of the valleys, or on the side of one of the mountains of the southern half of the hemisphere, to be held, this day, in the neighborhood of a large city;— what would be the scene presented? Yonder is a volcano, flaming and smoking, but shedding no light, moral or intellectual. At its foot is the mine, yielding, perhaps, sometimes, large gains to capital, but in which labor is destined to eternal and unrequited toil, and rewarded only by penury and beggary. The city is filled with armed men; not a free people, armed and coming forth voluntarily to rejoice in a public festivity; but hireling troops, supported by forced loans, excessive impositions on commerce, or taxes wrung from a half fed, and a half clothed population. For the great there are palaces covered with gold; for the poor there are hovels of the meanest sort. There is an ecclesiastical hierarchy enjoying the wealth of princes; but there are no means of education to the people. Do public improvements favor intercourse between place and place? So far from this, that the traveller cannot pass from town to town, without danger, every mile, of robbery and assassination. I would not overcharge, or exaggerate this picture; but its principal sketches are all too true.

And how does it contrast with the scene now actually before us? Look round upon these fields; they are verdant and beautiful, well cultivated, and at this moment loaded with the riches of the early harvest. The hands which till them are free owners of the soil, enjoying equal rights, and protected by law from oppression and tyranny. Look to the thousand vessels in our sight, filling the harbor, or covering the neighboring sea. They are the instruments of a profitable commerce, carried on by men who know that the profits of their hardy enterprise, when they make them, are their own; and this commerce is encouraged and regulated by wise laws, and defended, when need be, by the valor and patriotism of the country. Look to that fair city, the abode of so much diffused wealth, so much general happiness and comfort; so much personal independence, and so much general knowledge. She fears no forced contributions, no siege or sacking from military leaders of rival factions. The hundred temples, in which her citizens worship God, are in no danger of sacrilege. The regular administration of the laws encounters no obstacle. The long processions of children and youth, which you see this day, issuing by thousands from the free schools, prove the care and anxiety, with which a popular government provides for the education and morals of the people. Everywhere there is order; everywhere there is security. Everywhere the law reaches to the highest, and reaches to the lowest, to protect him in his rights, and to restrain him from wrong; and over

all hovers liberty, that liberty which our fathers fought, and fell for, on this very spot, with her eye ever watchful, and her eagle wing ever wide outspread.

The colonies of Spain, from their origin to their end were subject to the sovereign authority of the kingdom. Their government, as well as their commerce, was a strict home monopoly. If we add to this, the established usage of filling important posts in the administration of the colonies, exclusively by natives of old Spain, thus cutting off forever, all hopes of honorable preferment from every man born in the western hemisphere, causes enough rise up before us at once, to account fully for the subsequent history and character of these provinces. The Viceroy and Provincial Governors of Spain were never at home, in their governments in America. They did not feel that they were of the people, whom they governed. Their official character and employment have a good deal of resemblance to those of the Pro-consuls of Rome, in Asia, Sicily and Gaul; but obviously no resemblance to those of Carver and Winthrop, and very little to those of the Governors of Virginia after that colony had established a popular house of Burgesses.

The English colonists in America, generally speaking, were men who were seeking new homes in a new world. They brought with them their families and all that was most dear to them. This was especially the case with the colonists of Plymouth and Massachusetts. Many of them were educated men, and all possessed their full share, according to their social condition, of the knowledge and attainments of that age. The distinctive characteristic of their settlement, is the introduction of the civilization of Europe into a wilderness, without bringing with it the political institutions of Europe. The arts, sciences, and literature of England came over with the settlers. That great portion of the common law, which regulates the social and personal relations and conduct of men, came also. The jury came; the habeas corpus came; the testamentary power came, and the law of inheritance and descent came also, except that part of it which recognises the rights of primogeniture, which either did not come at all, or soon gave way to the rule of equal partition of estates among children. But the monarchy did not come, nor the aristocracy, nor the church as an estate of the realm. Political institutions were to be framed anew, such as should be adapted to the state of things. But it could not be doubtful, what should be the nature and character of these institutions. A general social equality prevailed among the settlers, and an equality of political rights seemed the natural, if not the necessary consequence. After forty years of revolution, violence and war, the people of France have placed at the head of the fundamental instrument of their government, as the great boon obtained by all their sufferings and sacrifices, the declaration, that all Frenchmen are equal before the law. What France had reached only by the expenditure of so much blood and treasure, and the exhibition of so much crime, the English colonists obtained, by simply changing their place, carrying with them the intellectual and moral cul-

ture of Europe, and the personal and social relations to which they were accustomed, but leaving behind their political institutions. It has been said with much veracity, that the felicity of the American colonists consisted in their escape from the past. This is true, so far as respects political establishments, but no further. They brought with them a full portion of all the riches of the past, in science, in art, in morals, religion and literature. The Bible came with them. And it is not to be doubted, that to the free and universal reading of the Bible, is to be ascribed in that age, ascribed in every age, that men were much indebted for right views of civil liberty. The Bible is a book of faith, and a book of doctrine ; but it is also a book, which teaches man his own individual responsibility, his own dignity, and his equality with his fellow man. Bacon, and Locke, and Milton and Shakspeare also came with them. They came to form new political systems, but all that belonged to cultivated man, to family, to neighborhood, to social relations, accompanied them. In the Doric phrase of one of our own historians, "they came to settle on bare creation ;" but their settlement in the wilderness, nevertheless, was not a lodgment of nominal tribes, a mere resting-place of roaming savages. It was the beginning of a permanent community, the fixed residence of cultivated men. Not only was English literature read, but English, good English, was spoken and written, before the axe had made way to let in the sun upon the habitations and fields of the settlers. And whatever may be said to the contrary, a correct use of the English language is, at this day, more general throughout the United States than it is throughout England herself. But another grand characteristic is, that in the English colonies, political affairs were left to be managed by the colonists themselves. There is another fact wholly distinguishing them in character as it has distinguished them in fortune, from the colonists of Spain. Here lies the foundation of that experience in self-government, which had preserved order, and security, and regularity amidst the play of popular institutions. Home government was the secret of the prosperity of the North American settlements. The more distinguished of the New England colonists, with a most remarkable sagacity, and a long-sighted reach into futurity, refused to come to America, unless they could bring with them charters providing for the administration of their affairs in this country. They saw, from the first, the evils of being governed in a new world by counsels held in the old. Acknowledging the general superiority of the crown, they still insisted on the right of passing local laws, and of local administration. And history teaches us the justice and the value of this determination, in the example of Virginia. The attempts early to settle that colony failed, sometimes with the most melancholy and fatal consequences, from want of knowledge, care and attention on the part of those who had the charge of their affairs in England ; and it was only after the issuing of the third charter, that its prosperity fairly commenced. The cause was that, by that third charter, the People of Virginia, (for by this time they so deserve to be called,) were al-

lowed to constitute and establish the first popular representative Assembly, which ever convened on this continent, the Virginia House of Burgesses.

Here then, are the great elements of our political system originally introduced, early in operation, and ready to be developed, more and more as the progress of events should justify or demand.

Escape from the existing political systems of Europe ; but the continued enjoyment of its sciences and arts, its literature, and its manners ; with a series of improvements upon its religious and moral sentiments and habits ; Home governments ; or the power of passing local laws, with a local administration.

Equality of rights.

Representative systems.

Free forms of Government, founded on popular Representation.

Few topics are more inviting, or more fit for philosophical discussion, than the action and influence of the new world upon the old ; or the contributions of America to Europe.

Her obligations to Europe for science and art, laws, literature and manners, America acknowledges as she ought, with respect and gratitude. And the people of the United States, descendants of the English stock, grateful for the treasures of knowledge derived from their English ancestors, acknowledge also, with thanks and filial regard, that among those ancestors, under the culture of Hampden and Sydney, and other assiduous friends, that seed of popular liberty first germinated, which on our soil has shot up to its full height, until its branches overshadow all the land.

But America has not failed to make returns. If she has not cancelled the obligation, or equalled it by others of like weight, she has, at least, made respectable advances, and some approaches towards equality. And she admits, that standing in the midst of civilized nations, and in a civilized age — a nation among nations — there is a high part which she is expected to act, for the general advance of human interests and human welfare.

American mines have filled the mints of Europe with the precious metals. The productions of the American soil and climate have poured out their abundance of luxuries for the tables of the rich, and of necessities for the sustenance of the poor. Birds and animals of beauty and value have been added to the European stocks ; and transplantations from the transcendant and unequalled riches of our forests have mingled themselves profusely with the elms, and ashes, and druidal oaks of England.

America has made contributions far more vast. Who can estimate the amount, or the value, of the augmentation of the commerce of the world, that has resulted from America ? Who can imagine to himself, what would be the shock to the Eastern Continent, if the Atlantic were no longer traversable, or there were no longer American productions, or American markets ?

But America exercises influences, or holds out examples for the consideration of the Old World, of a much higher, because they are of a moral and political character.

America has furnished to Europe proof of the fact that popular institutions, founded on equality and the principle of representation, are capable of maintaining governments — able to secure the rights of person, property and reputation.

America has proved that it is practicable to elevate the mass of mankind — that portion which in Europe is called the laboring, or lower class — to raise them to self respect, to make them competent to act a part in the great right, and great duty, of self-government; and this she has proved may be done by education and the diffusion of knowledge. She holds out an example, a thousand times more enchanting than ever was presented before, to those nine-tenths of the human race who are born without hereditary fortune or hereditary rank.

America has furnished to the world the character of Washington! And if our American institutions had done nothing else, that alone would have entitled them to the respect of mankind.

Washington! "First in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen!" Washington is all our own! The enthusiastic veneration and regard in which the people of the United States hold him, prove them to be worthy of such a countryman; while his reputation abroad reflects the highest honor on his country and its institutions. I would cheerfully put the question to-day to the intelligence of Europe and the world, what character of the century, upon the whole, stands out in the relief of history, most pure, most respectable, most sublime; and I doubt not, that by a suffrage approaching to unanimity, the answer would be Washington!

This structure, by its uprightness, its solidity, its durability, is no unfit emblem of his character. His public virtues and public principles were as firm as the earth on which it stands; his personal motives, as pure as the serene heaven in which its summit is lost. But, indeed, though a fit, it is an inadequate emblem. Towering high above the column which our hands have builded, beheld, not by the inhabitants of a single city or a single State — ascends the colossal grandeur of his character, and his life. In all the constituents of the one — in all the acts of the other — in all its titles to immortal love, admiration and renown — it is an American production. It is the embodiment and vindication of our transatlantic liberty. Born upon our soil — of parents also born upon it — never for a moment having had a sight of the old world — instructed, according to the modes of his time, only in the spare, plain, but wholesome elementary knowledge which our institutions provide for the children of the people — growing up beneath and penetrated by the genuine influences of American society — growing up amidst our expanding, but not luxurious, civilization — partaking in our great destiny of labor, our long contest with unreclaimed nature and uncivilized man — our agony of glory, the war of independence — our great victory of peace, the formation of the Union and the establishment of the Constitution — he is all — all our own! That crowded and glorious life —

"Where multitudes of virtues passed along,
Each pressing foremost in the mighty throng
Contending to be seen, then making room
For greater multitudes that were to come; —"

that life was the life of an American citizen.

I claim him for America. In all the perils, in every darkened moment of the state, in the midst of the reproaches of enemies and the misgiving of friends — I turn to that transcendent name for courage and for consolation. To him who denies, or doubts whether our fervid liberty can be combined with law, with order, with the security of property, with the pursuits and advancement of happiness — to him who denies that our institutions are capable of producing exaltation of soul and the passion of true glory — to him who denies that we have contributed anything to the stock of great lessons and great examples — to all these I reply by pointing to Washington!

And now, friends and fellow-citizens, it is time to bring this discourse to a close.

We have indulged in gratifying recollections of the past, in the prosperity and pleasures of the present, and in high hopes of the future. But let us remember that we have duties and obligations to perform, corresponding to the blessings which we enjoy. Let us remember the trust, the sacred trust, attaching to the rich inheritance which we have received from our fathers. Let us feel our personal responsibility, to the full extent of our power and influence, for the preservation of our institutions of civil and religious liberty. And let us remember that it is only religion, and morals, and knowledge, that can make men respectable and happy under any form of government. Let us hold fast the great truth that communities are responsible, as well as individuals; that no government is respectable which is not just; that without unspotted purity of public faith, without sacred public principle, fidelity and honor — no mere forms of government, no machinery of laws, can give dignity to political society. In our day and generation let us seek to raise and improve the moral sentiment, so that we may look, not for a degraded, but for an elevated and improved future. And when we, and our children, shall all have been consigned to the house appointed for all living, may love of country — and pride of country — glow with equal fervor among those to whom our names and our blood shall have descended! And then, when honored and decrepid age shall lean against the base of this monument, and troops of ingenuous youth shall be gathered round it, and when the one shall speak to the other of its objects, the purposes of its construction, and the great and glorious events with which it is connected — there shall rise, from every youthful breast, the ejaculation — "thank God, I — I also — am an American."

"LET IT RISE, TILL IT MEET THE SUN IN HIS COMING ; LET THE EARLIEST
LIGHT OF THE MORNING GILD IT, AND PARTING DAY
LINGER AND PLAY ON ITS SUMMIT."

AN

ADDRESS

DELIVERED AT THE LAYING OF THE CORNER STONE

OF THE

BUNKER HILL MONUMENT,

JUNE 17, 1825.

BY DANIEL WEBSTER.

BOSTON:

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1843.

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ADDRESS

DELIVERED AT THE LAYING OF THE CORNER STONE OF THE BUNKER HILL MONUMENT. JUNE 17, 1825.

THIS uncounted multitude before me, and around me, proves the feeling which the occasion has excited. These thousands of human faces, glowing with sympathy and joy, and, from the impulses of a common gratitude, turned reverently to heaven, in this spacious temple of the firmament, proclaim that the day, the place, and the purpose of our assembling have made a deep impression on our hearts.

If, indeed, there be anything in local association fit to affect the mind of man, we need not strive to repress the emotions which agitate us here. We are among the sepulchres of our fathers. We are on ground, distinguished by their valor, their constancy, and the shedding of their blood. We are here, not to fix an uncertain date in our annals, nor to draw into notice an obscure and unknown spot. If our humble purpose had never been conceived, if we ourselves had never been born, the 17th of June 1775 would have been a day on which all subsequent history would have poured its light, and the eminence where we stand, a point of attraction to the eyes of successive generations. But we are Americans. We live in what may be called the early age of this great continent; and we know that our posterity, through all time, are here to suffer and enjoy the allotments of humanity. We see before us a propable train of great events; we know that our own fortunes have been happily cast; and it is natural, therefore, that we should be moved by the contemplation of occurrences which have guided our destiny before many of us were born, and settled the condition in which we should pass that portion of our existence, which God allows to men on earth.

We do not read even of the discovery of this continent, without feeling something of a personal interest in the event; without being reminded how much it has affected our own fortunes, and our own existence. It is more impossible for us, therefore, than for others, to contemplate with unaffected minds that interesting, I may say, that most touching and pathetic scene, when the great Discoverer of America stood on the deck of his shattered bark, the shades of night falling on the sea, yet no man sleeping; tossed on the billows

of an unknown ocean, yet the stronger billows of alternate hope and despair tossing his own troubled thoughts; extending forward his harassed frame, straining westward his anxious and eager eyes, till Heaven at last granted him a moment of rapture and ecstasy, in blessing his vision with the sight of the unknown world.

Nearer to our times, more closely connected with our fates, and therefore still more interesting to our feelings and affections, is the settlement of our own country by colonists from England. We cherish every memorial of these worthy ancestors; we celebrate their patience and fortitude; we admire their daring enterprise; we teach our children to venerate their piety; and we are justly proud of being descended from men, who have set the world an example of founding civil institutions on the great and united principles of human freedom and human knowledge. To us, their children, the story of their labors and sufferings can never be without its interest. We shall not stand unmoved on the shore of Plymouth, while the sea continues to wash it; nor will our brethren in another early and ancient colony, forget the place of its first establishment, till their river shall cease to flow by it. No vigor of youth, no maturity of manhood, will lead the nation to forget the spots where its infancy was cradled and defended.

But the great event, in the history of the continent, which we are now met here to commemorate; that prodigy of modern times, at once the wonder and the blessing of the world, is the American Revolution. In a day of extraordinary prosperity and happiness, of high national honor, distinction, and power, we are brought together, in this place, by our love of country, by our admiration of exalted character, by our gratitude for signal services and patriotic devotion.

The society, whose organ I am, was formed for the purpose of rearing some honorable and durable monument to the memory of the early friends of American Independence. They have thought, that for this object no time could be more propitious, than the present prosperous and peaceful period; that no place could claim preference over this memorable spot; and that no day could be more auspicious to the undertaking, than the anniversary of the battle which was here fought. The foundation of that monument we have now laid. With solemnities suited to the occasion, with prayers to Almighty God for his blessing, and in the midst of this cloud of witnesses, we have begun the work. We trust it will be prosecuted, and that springing from a broad foundation, rising high in massive solidity and unadorned grandeur, it may remain, as long as Heaven permits the works of man to last, a fit emblem, both of the events in memory of which it is raised, and of the gratitude of those who have reared it.

We know, indeed, that the record of illustrious actions is most safely deposited in the universal remembrance of mankind. We know, that if we could cause this structure to ascend, not only till it reached the skies, but till it pierced them, its broad surfaces could still contain but part of that, which, in an age of knowledge, hath already been spread over the earth, and which history charges itself

with making known to all future times. We know, that no inscription on entablatures less broad than the earth itself, can carry information of the events we commemorate, where it has not already gone; and that no structure, which shall not outlive the duration of letters and knowledge among men, can prolong the memorial. But our object is, by this edifice to show our own deep sense of the value and importance of the achievements of our ancestors; and, by presenting this work of gratitude to the eye, to keep alive similar sentiments, and to foster a constant regard for the principles of the Revolution. Human beings are composed not of reason only, but of imagination also, and sentiment; and that is neither wasted nor misapplied which is appropriated to the purpose of giving right direction to sentiments, and opening proper springs of feeling in the heart. Let it not be supposed that our object is to perpetuate national hostility, or even to cherish a mere military spirit. It is higher, purer, nobler. We consecrate our work to the spirit of national independence, and we wish that the light of peace may rest upon it forever. We rear a memorial of our conviction of that unmeasured benefit, which has been conferred on our own land, and of the happy influences, which have been produced, by the same events, on the general interests of mankind. We come, as Americans, to mark a spot, which must forever be dear to us and our posterity. We wish, that whosoever, in all coming time, shall turn his eye hither, may behold that the place is not undistinguished, where the first great battle of the Revolution was fought. We wish, that this structure may proclaim the magnitude and importance of that event, to every class and every age. We wish, that infancy may learn the purpose of its erection from maternal lips, and that weary and withered age may behold it, and be solaced by the recollections which it suggests. We wish, that labor may look up here, and be proud, in the midst of its toil. We wish, that, in those days of disaster, which, as they come on all nations, must be expected to come on us also, desponding patriotism may turn its eyes hitherward, and be assured that the foundations of our national power still stand strong. We wish, that this column, rising towards heaven among the pointed spires of so many temples dedicated to God, may contribute also to produce, in all minds, a pious feeling of dependence and gratitude. We wish, finally, that the last object on the sight of him who leaves his native shore, and the first to gladden his who revisits it, may be something which shall remind him of the liberty and the glory of his country. Let it rise, till it meet the sun in his coming; let the earliest light of the morning gild it, and parting day linger and play on its summit.

We live in a most extraordinary age. Events so various and so important, that they might crowd and distinguish centuries, are, in our times, compressed within the compass of a single life. When has it happened that history has had so much to record, in the same term of years, as since the 17th of June 1775? Our own Revolution, which, under other circumstances, might itself have been expected to occasion a war of half a century, has been achieved; twenty-four sovereign and independent states erected; and a general

government established over them, so safe, so wise, so free, so practical, that we might well wonder its establishment should have been accomplished so soon, were it not for the greater wonder that it should have been established at all. Two or three millions of people have been augmented to twelve; and the great forests of the West prostrated beneath the arm of successful industry; and the dwellers on the banks of the Ohio and the Mississippi, become the fellow citizens and neighbours of those who cultivate the hills of New England. We have a commerce, that leaves no sea unexplored; navies, which take no law from superior force; revenues, adequate to all the exigencies of government, almost without taxation; and peace with all nations, founded on equal rights and mutual respect.

Europe, within the same period, has been agitated by a mighty revolution, which, while it has been felt in the individual condition and happiness of almost every man, has shaken to the centre her political fabric, and dashed against one another thrones, which had stood tranquil for ages. On this, our continent, our own example has been followed; and colonies have sprung up to be nations. Unaccustomed sounds of liberty and free government have reached us from beyond the track of the sun; and at this moment the dominion of European power, in this continent, from the place where we stand to the south pole, is annihilated forever.

In the meantime, both in Europe and America, such has been the general progress of knowledge; such the improvements in legislation, in commerce, in the arts, in letters, and above all in liberal ideas, and the general spirit of the age, that the whole world seems changed.

Yet, notwithstanding that this is but a faint abstract of the things which have happened since the day of the battle of Bunker Hill, we are but fifty years removed from it; and we now stand here, to enjoy all the blessings of our own condition, and to look abroad on the brightened prospects of the world, while we hold still among us some of those, who were active agents in the scenes of 1775, and who are now here, from every quarter of New England, to visit, once more, and under circumstances so affecting, I had almost said so overwhelming, this renowned theatre of their courage and patriotism.

VENERABLE MEN! you have come down to us, from a former generation. Heaven has bounteously lengthened out your lives, that you might behold this joyous day. You are now, where you stood, fifty years ago, this very hour, with your brothers, and your neighbours, shoulder to shoulder, in the strife for your country. Behold, how altered! The same heavens are indeed over your heads; the same ocean rolls at your feet; but all else, how changed! You hear now no roar of hostile cannon, you see no mixed volumes of smoke and flame rising from burning Charlestown. The ground strowed with the dead and the dying; the impetuous charge; the steady and successful repulse; the loud call to repeated assault; the summoning of all that is manly to repeated resistance; a thousand bosoms freely and fearlessly bared in an instant to whatever of terror there

may be in war and death;—all these you have witnessed, but you witness them no more. All is peace. The heights of yonder metropolis, its towers and roofs, which you then saw filled with wives and children and countrymen in distress and terror, and looking with unutterable emotions for the issue of the combat, have presented you to-day with the sight of its whole happy population, come out to welcome and greet you with an universal jubilee. Yonder proud ships, by a felicity of position appropriately lying at the foot of this mount, and seeming fondly to cling around it, are not means of annoyance to you, but your country's own means of distinction and defence. All is peace; and God has granted you this sight of your country's happiness, ere you slumber in the grave forever. He has allowed you to behold and to partake the reward of your patriotic toils; and he has allowed us, your sons and countrymen, to meet you here, and in the name of the present generation, in the name of your country, in the name of liberty, to thank you!

But, alas! you are not all here! Time and the sword have thinned your ranks. Prescott, Putnam, Stark, Brooks, Read, Pomeroy, Bridge! our eyes seek for you in vain amidst this broken band. You are gathered to your fathers, and live only to your country in her grateful remembrance, and your own bright example. But let us not too much grieve, that you have met the common fate of men. You lived, at least, long enough to know that your work had been nobly and successfully accomplished. You lived to see your country's independence established, and to sheathe your swords from war. On the light of Liberty you saw arise the light of Peace, like

‘another morn,
Risen on mid-noon;’—

and the sky, on which you closed your eyes, was cloudless.

But—ah!—Him! the first great Martyr in this great cause! Him! the premature victim of his own self-devoting heart! Him! the head of our civil councils, and the destined leader of our military bands; whom nothing brought hither, but the unquenchable fire of his own spirit; Him! cut off by Providence, in the hour of overwhelming anxiety and thick gloom; falling, ere he saw the star of his country rise; pouring out his generous blood, like water, before he knew whether it would fertilize a land of freedom or of bondage! how shall I struggle with the emotions, that stifle the utterance of thy name!—Our poor work may perish; but thine shall endure! This monument may moulder away; the solid ground it rests upon may sink down to a level with the sea; but thy memory shall not fail! Wheresoever among men a heart shall be found, that beats to the transports of patriotism and liberty, its aspirations shall be to claim kindred with thy spirit!

But the scene amidst which we stand does not permit us to confine our thoughts or our sympathies to those fearless spirits, who hazarded or lost their lives on this consecrated spot. We have the happiness to rejoice here in the presence of a most worthy representation of the survivors of the whole Revolutionary Army.

VETERANS! you are the remnant of many a well fought field. You bring with you marks of honor from Trenton and Monmouth, from Yorktown, Camden, Bennington, and Saratoga. VETERANS OF HALF A CENTURY! when in your youthful days, you put everything at hazard in your country's cause, good as that cause was, and sanguine as youth is, still your fondest hopes did not stretch onward to an hour like this! At a period to which you could not reasonably have expected to arrive; at a moment of national prosperity, such as you could never have foreseen, you are now met, here, to enjoy the fellowship of old soldiers, and to receive the overflowings of an universal gratitude.

But your agitated countenances and your heaving breasts inform me that even this is not an unmixed joy. I perceive that a tumult of contending feelings rushes upon you. The images of the dead, as well as the persons of the living, throng to your embraces. The scene overwhelms you, and I turn from it. May the Father of all mercies smile upon your declining years, and bless them! And when you shall here have exchanged your embraces; when you shall once more have pressed the hands which have been so often extended to give succour in adversity, or grasped in the exultation of victory; then look abroad into this lovely land, which your young valor defended, and mark the happiness with which it is filled; yea, look abroad into the whole earth, and see what a name you have contributed to give to your country, and what a praise you have added to freedom, and then rejoice in the sympathy and gratitude, which beam upon your last days from the improved condition of mankind.

The occasion does not require of me any particular account of the battle of the 17th of June, nor any detailed narrative of the events which immediately preceded it. These are familiarly known to all. In the progress of the great and interesting controversy, Massachusetts and the town of Boston had become early and marked objects of the displeasure of the British Parliament. This had been manifested, in the Act for altering the Government of the Province, and in that for shutting up the Port of Boston. Nothing sheds more honor on our early history, and nothing better shows how little the feelings and sentiments of the colonies were known or regarded in England, than the impression which these measures everywhere produced in America. It had been anticipated, that while the other colonies would be terrified by the severity of the punishment inflicted on Massachusetts, the other seaports would be governed by a mere spirit of gain; and that, as Boston was now cut off from all commerce, the unexpected advantage, which this blow on her was calculated to confer on other towns, would be greedily enjoyed. How miserably such reasoners deceived themselves! How little they knew of the depth, and the strength, and the intenseness of that feeling of resistance to illegal acts of power, which possessed the whole American people! Everywhere the unworthy boon was rejected with scorn. The fortunate occasion was seized, everywhere, to show to the whole world, that the colonies were swayed by no local interest, no partial interest, no selfish interest. The tempt-

ation to profit by the punishment of Boston was strongest to our neighbours of Salem. Yet Salem was precisely the place, where this miserable proffer was spurned, in a tone of the most lofty self-respect, and the most indignant patriotism. "We are deeply affected," said its inhabitants, "with the sense of our public calamities; but the miseries that are now rapidly hastening on our brethren in the capital of the Province, greatly excite our commiseration. By shutting up the port of Boston, some imagine that the course of trade might be turned hither and to our benefit; but we must be dead to every idea of justice, lost to all feelings of humanity, could we indulge a thought to seize on wealth, and raise our fortunes on the ruin of our suffering neighbours." These noble sentiments were not confined to our immediate vicinity. In that day of general affection and brotherhood, the blow given to Boston smote on every patriotic heart, from one end of the country to the other. Virginia and the Carolinas, as well as Connecticut and New Hampshire, felt and proclaimed the cause to be their own. The Continental Congress, then holding its first session in Philadelphia, expressed its sympathy for the suffering inhabitants of Boston, and addresses were received from all quarters, assuring them that the cause was a common one, and should be met by common efforts and common sacrifices. The Congress of Massachusetts responded to these assurances; and in an address to the Congress at Philadelphia, bearing the official signature, perhaps among the last, of the immortal Warren, notwithstanding the severity of its suffering and the magnitude of the dangers which threatened it, it was declared, that this colony "is ready, at all times, to spend and to be spent in the cause of America."

But the hour drew nigh, which was to put professions to the proof, and to determine whether the authors of these mutual pledges were ready to seal them in blood. The tidings of Lexington and Concord had no sooner spread, than it was universally felt, that the time was at last come for action. A spirit pervaded all ranks, not transient, not boisterous, but deep, solemn, determined,

"totamque infusa per artus

Mens agitat molem, et magno se corpore miscet."

War, on their own soil and at their own doors, was, indeed, a strange work to the yeomanry of New England; but their consciences were convinced of its necessity, their country called them to it, and they did not withhold themselves from the perilous trial. The ordinary occupations of life were abandoned; the plough was staid in the unfinished furrow; wives gave up their husbands, and mothers gave up their sons, to the battles of a civil war. Death might come, in honor, on the field; it might come, in disgrace, on the scaffold. For either and for both they were prepared. The sentiment of Quincy was full in their hearts. "Blandishments," said that distinguished son of genius and patriotism, "will not fascinate us, nor will threats of a halter intimidate; for, under God, we are determined, that where-soever, whensoever, or howsoever we shall be called to make our exit, we will die free men."

The 17th of June saw the four New England colonies standing here, side by side, to triumph or to fall together; and there was with

them from that moment to the end of the war, what I hope will remain with them forever, one cause, one country, one heart.

The battle of Bunker Hill was attended with the most important effects beyond its immediate result as a military engagement. It created at once a state of open, public war. There could now be no longer a question of proceeding against individuals, as guilty of treason or rebellion. That fearful crisis was past. The appeal now lay to the sword, and the only question was, whether the spirit and the resources of the people would hold out, till the object should be accomplished. Nor were its general consequences confined to our own country. The previous proceedings of the colonies, their appeals, resolutions, and addresses, had made their cause known to Europe. Without boasting, we may say, that in no age or country, has the public cause been maintained with more force of argument, more power of illustration, or more of that persuasion which excited feeling and elevated principle can alone bestow, than the revolutionary state papers exhibit. These papers will forever deserve to be studied, not only for the spirit which they breathe, but for the ability with which they were written.

To this able vindication of their cause, the colonies had now added a practical and severe proof of their own true devotion to it, and evidence also of the power which they could bring to its support. All now saw, that if America fell, she would not fall without a struggle. Men felt sympathy and regard, as well as surprise, when they beheld these infant states, remote, unknown, unaided, encounter the power of England, and in the first considerable battle, leave more of their enemies dead on the field, in proportion to the number of combatants, than they had recently known in the wars of Europe.

Information of these events, circulating through Europe, at length reached the ears of one who now hears me. He has not forgotten the emotion, which the fame of Bunker Hill, and the name of Warren, excited in his youthful breast.

SIR, we are assembled to commemorate the establishment of great public principles of liberty, and to do honor to the distinguished dead. The occasion is too severe for eulogy to the living. But, sir, your interesting relation to this country, the peculiar circumstances which surround you and surround us, call on me to express the happiness which we derive from your presence and aid in this solemn commemoration.

Fortunate, fortunate man! with what measure of devotion will you not thank God, for the circumstances of your extraordinary life! You are connected with both hemispheres and with two generations. Heaven saw fit to ordain, that the electric spark of Liberty should be conducted, through you, from the new world to the old; and we, who are now here to perform this duty of patriotism, have all of us long ago received it in charge from our fathers to cherish your name and your virtues. You will account it an instance of your good fortune, sir, that you crossed the seas to visit us at a time which enables you to be present at this solemnity. You now behold the field, the renown of which reached you in the heart of France, and caused a thrill in your ardent bosom. You see the lines of the little

redoubt thrown up by the incredible diligence of Prescott; defended, to the last extremity, by his lion-hearted valor; and within which the corner stone of our monument has now taken its position. You see where Warren fell, and where Parker, Gardner, McCleary, Moore, and other early patriots fell with him. Those who survived that day, and whose lives have been prolonged to the present hour, are now around you. Some of them you have known in the trying scenes of the war. Behold! they now stretch forth their feeble arms to embrace you. Behold! they raise their trembling voices to invoke the blessing of God on you, and yours, forever.

Sir, you have assisted us in laying the foundation of this edifice. You have heard us rehearse, with our feeble commendation, the names of departed patriots. Sir, monuments and eulogy belong to the dead. We give them, this day, to Warren and his associates. On other occasions they have been given to your more immediate companions in arms, to Washington, to Greene, to Gates, Sullivan, and Lincoln. Sir, we have become reluctant to grant these, our highest and last honors, further. We would gladly hold them yet back from the little remnant of that immortal band. *Servus in calum redeas.* Illustrious as are your merits, yet far, oh, very far distant be the day, when any inscription shall bear your name, or any tongue pronounce its eulogy!

The leading reflection, to which this occasion seems to invite us, respects the great changes which have happened in the fifty years, since the battle of Bunker Hill was fought. And it peculiarly marks the character of the present age, that, in looking at these changes, and in estimating their effect on our condition, we are obliged to consider, not what has been done in our own country only, but in others also. In these interesting times, while nations are making separate and individual advances in improvement, they make, too, a common progress; like vessels on a common tide, propelled by the gales at different rates, according to their several structure and management, but all moved forward by one mighty current beneath, strong enough to bear onward whatever does not sink beneath it.

A chief distinction of the present day is a community of opinions and knowledge amongst men, in different nations, existing in a degree heretofore unknown. Knowledge has, in our time, triumphed, and is triumphing, over distance, over difference of languages, over diversity of habits, over prejudice, and over bigotry. The civilized and Christian world is fast learning the great lesson, that difference of nation does not imply necessary hostility, and that all contact need not be war. The whole world is becoming a common field for intellect to act in. Energy of mind, genius, power, wheresoever it exists, may speak out in any tongue, and the *world* will hear it. A great chord of sentiment and feeling runs through two continents, and vibrates over both. Every breeze wafts intelligence from country to country; every wave rolls it; all give it forth, and all in turn receive it. There is a vast commerce of ideas; there are marts and exchanges for intellectual discoveries, and a wonderful fellowship of those individual intelligences which make up the mind and opinion of the age. Mind is the great lever of all things; human thought is

the process by which human ends are ultimately answered; and the diffusion of knowledge, so astonishing in the last half century, has rendered innumerable minds, variously gifted by nature, competent to be competitors, or fellow-workers, on the theatre of intellectual operation.

From these causes, important improvements have taken place in the personal condition of individuals. Generally speaking, mankind are not only better fed, and better clothed, but they are able also to enjoy more leisure; they possess more refinement and more self-respect. A superior tone of education, manners, and habits prevails. This remark, most true in its application to our own country, is also partly true, when applied elsewhere. It is proved by the vastly augmented consumption of those articles of manufacture and of commerce, which contribute to the comforts and the decencies of life; an augmentation which has far outrun the progress of population. And while the unexampled and almost incredible use of machinery would seem to supply the place of labor, labor still finds its occupation and its reward; so wisely has Providence adjusted men's wants and desires to their condition and their capacity.

Any adequate survey, however, of the progress made in the last half century, in the polite and the mechanic arts, in machinery and manufactures, in commerce and agriculture, in letters and in science, would require volumes. I must abstain wholly from these subjects, and turn, for a moment, to the contemplation of what has been done on the great question of politics and government. This is the master topic of the age; and during the whole fifty years, it has intensely occupied the thoughts of men. The nature of civil government, its ends and uses, have been canvassed and investigated; ancient opinions attacked and defended; new ideas recommended and resisted, by whatever power the mind of man could bring to the controversy. From the closet and the public halls the debate has been transferred to the field; and the world has been shaken by wars of unexampled magnitude, and the greatest variety of fortune. A day of peace has at length succeeded; and now that the strife has subsided, and the smoke cleared away, we may begin to see what has actually been done, permanently changing the state and condition of human society. And without dwelling on particular circumstances, it is most apparent, that, from the beforementioned causes of augmented knowledge and improved individual condition, a real, substantial, and important change has taken place, and is taking place, greatly beneficial, on the whole, to human liberty and human happiness.

The great wheel of political revolution began to move in America. Here its rotation was guarded, regular, and safe. Transferred to the other continent, from unfortunate but natural causes, it received an irregular and violent impulse; it whirled along with a fearful celerity; till at length, like the chariot wheels in the races of antiquity, it took fire from the rapidity of its own motion, and blazed onward, spreading conflagration and terror around.

We learn from the result of this experiment, how fortunate was our own condition, and how admirably the character of our people was calculated for making the great example of popular govern-

ments. The possession of power did not turn the heads of the American people, for they had long been in the habit of exercising a great portion of self-control. Although the paramount authority of the parent state existed over them, yet a large field of legislation had always been open to our colonial assemblies. They were accustomed to representative bodies and the forms of free government; they understood the doctrine of the division of power among different branches, and the necessity of checks on each. The character of our countrymen, moreover, was sober, moral, and religious; and there was little in the change to shock their feelings of justice and humanity, or even to disturb an honest prejudice. We had no domestic throne to overturn, no privileged orders to cast down, no violent changes of property to encounter. In the American Revolution, no man sought or wished for more than to defend and enjoy his own. None hoped for plunder or for spoil. Rapacity was unknown to it; the axe was not among the instruments of its accomplishment; and we all know that it could not have lived a single day under any well founded imputation of possessing a tendency adverse to the Christian religion.

It need not surprise us, that, under circumstances less auspicious, political revolutions elsewhere, even when well intended, have terminated differently. It is, indeed, a great achievement, it is the master work of the world, to establish governments entirely popular, on lasting foundations; nor is it easy, indeed, to introduce the popular principle at all, into governments to which it has been altogether a stranger. It cannot be doubted, however, that Europe has come out of the contest, in which she has been so long engaged, with greatly superior knowledge, and, in many respects, a highly improved condition. Whatever benefit has been acquired, is likely to be retained, for it consists mainly in the acquisition of more enlightened ideas. And although kingdoms and provinces may be wrested from the hands that hold them, in the same manner they were obtained; although ordinary and vulgar power may, in human affairs, be lost as it has been won; yet it is the glorious prerogative of the empire of knowledge, that what it gains it never loses. On the contrary, it increases by the multiple of its own power; all its ends become means; all its attainments, helps to new conquests. Its whole abundant harvest is but so much seed wheat, and nothing has ascertained, and nothing can ascertain, the amount of ultimate product.

Under the influence of this rapidly increasing knowledge, the people have begun, in all forms of government, to think, and to reason, on affairs of state. Regarding government as an institution for the public good, they demand a knowledge of its operations, and a participation in its exercise. A call for the representative system, wherever it is not enjoyed, and where there is already intelligence enough to estimate its value, is perseveringly made. Where men may speak out, they demand it; where the bayonet is at their throats, they pray for it.

When Louis XIV. said, "I am the state," he expressed the essence of the doctrine of unlimited power. By the rules of that system, the people are disconnected from the state; they are its sub-

jects; it is their lord. These ideas, founded in the love of power, and long supported by the excess and the abuse of it, are yielding, in our age, to other opinions; and the civilized world seems at last to be proceeding to the conviction of that fundamental and manifest truth, that the powers of government are but a trust, and that they cannot be lawfully exercised but for the good of the community. As knowledge is more and more extended, this conviction becomes more and more general. Knowledge, in truth, is the great sun in the firmament. Life and power are scattered with all its beams. The prayer of the Grecian combatant, when enveloped in unnatural clouds and darkness, is the appropriate political supplication for the people of every country not yet blessed with free institutions;

‘ Dispel this cloud, the light of heaven restore,
Give me TO SEE—and Ajax asks no more.’

We may hope, that the growing influence of enlightened sentiments will promote the permanent peace of the world. Wars, to maintain family alliances, to uphold or to cast down dynasties, to regulate successions to thrones, which have occupied so much room in the history of modern times, if not less likely to happen at all, will be less likely to become general and involve many nations, as the great principle shall be more and more established, that the interest of the world is peace, and its first great statute, that every nation possesses the power of establishing a government for itself. But public opinion has attained also an influence over governments, which do not admit the popular principle into their organization. A necessary respect for the judgment of the world operates, in some measure, as a control over the most unlimited forms of authority. It is owing, perhaps, to this truth, that the interesting struggle of the Greeks has been suffered to go on so long, without a direct interference, either to wrest that country from its present masters, and add it to other powers, or to execute the system of pacification by force, and, with united strength, lay the neck of Christian and civilized Greece at the foot of the barbarian Turk. Let us thank God that we live in an age, when something has influence besides the bayonet, and when the sternest authority does not venture to encounter the scorching power of public reproach. Any attempt of the kind I have mentioned, should be met by one universal burst of indignation; the air of the civilized world ought to be made too warm to be comfortably breathed by any who would hazard it.

It is, indeed, a touching reflection, that while, in the fulness of our country’s happiness, we rear this monument to her honor, we look for instruction, in our undertaking, to a country which is now in fearful contest, not for works of art or memorials of glory, but for her own existence. Let her be assured, that she is not forgotten in the world; that her efforts are applauded, and that constant prayers ascend for her success. And let us cherish a confident hope for her final triumph. If the true spark of religious and civil liberty be kindled, it will burn. Human agency cannot extinguish it. Like the earth’s central fire it may be smothered for a time; the ocean may overwhelm it; mountains may press it down; but its inherent and unconquerable force will heave both the ocean and the

land, and at sometime or another, in some place or another, the volcano will break out and flame up to heaven.

Among the great events of the half century, we must reckon, certainly, the Revolution of South America; and we are not likely to overrate the importance of that Revolution, either to the people of the country itself or to the rest of the world. The late Spanish colonies, now independent states, under circumstances less favorable, doubtless, than attended our own Revolution, have yet successfully commenced their national existence. They have accomplished the great object of establishing their independence; they are known and acknowledged in the world; and although in regard to their systems of government, their sentiments on religious toleration, and their provisions for public instruction, they may have yet much to learn, it must be admitted that they have risen to the condition of settled and established states, more rapidly than could have been reasonably anticipated. They already furnish an exhilarating example of the difference between free governments and despotic misrule. Their commerce, at this moment, creates a new activity in all the great marts of the world. They show themselves able, by an exchange of commodities, to bear an useful part in the intercourse of nations.

A new spirit of enterprise and industry begins to prevail; all the great interests of society receive a salutary impulse; and the progress of information not only testifies to an improved condition, but constitutes, itself, the highest and most essential improvement.

When the battle of Bunker Hill was fought, the existence of South America was scarcely felt in the civilized world. The thirteen little colonies of North America habitually called themselves the "Continent." Borne down by colonial subjugation, monopoly, and bigotry, these vast regions of the South were hardly visible above the horizon. But in our day there hath been, as it were, a new creation. The Southern Hemisphere emerges from the sea. Its lofty mountains begin to lift themselves into the light of heaven; its broad and fertile plains stretch out, in beauty, to the eye of civilized man, and at the mighty bidding of the voice of political liberty the waters of darkness retire.

And, now, let us indulge an honest exultation in the conviction of the benefit, which the example of our country has produced, and is likely to produce, on human freedom and human happiness. And let us endeavour to comprehend, in all its magnitude, and to feel, in all its importance, the part assigned to us in the great drama of human affairs. We are placed at the head of the system of representative and popular governments. Thus far our example shows, that such governments are compatible, not only with respectability and power, but with repose, with peace, with security of personal rights, with good laws, and a just administration.

We are not propagandists. Wherever other systems are preferred, either as being thought better in themselves, or as better suited to existing condition, we leave the preference to be enjoyed. Our history hitherto proves, however, that the popular form is practicable, and that with wisdom and knowledge men may govern themselves; and the duty incumbent on us is, to preserve the consistency of this

cheering example, and take care that nothing may weaken its authority with the world. If, in our case, the Representative system ultimately fail, popular governments must be pronounced impossible. No combination of circumstances more favorable to the experiment can ever be expected to occur. The last hopes of mankind, therefore, rest with us; and if it should be proclaimed, that our example had become an argument against the experiment, the knell of popular liberty would be sounded throughout the earth.

These are excitements to duty; but they are not suggestions of doubt. Our history and our condition, all that is gone before us, and all that surrounds us, authorise the belief, that popular governments, though subject to occasional variations, perhaps not always for the better, in form, may yet, in their general character, be as durable and permanent as other systems. We know, indeed, that, in our country, any other is impossible. The *Principle* of Free Governments adheres to the American soil. It is bedded in it; immovable as its mountains.

And let the sacred obligations which have devolved on this generation, and on us, sink deep into our hearts. Those are daily dropping from among us, who established our liberty and our government. The great trust now descends to new hands. Let us apply ourselves to that which is presented to us, as our appropriate object. We can win no laurels in a war for Independence. Earlier and worthier hands have gathered them all. Nor are there places for us by the side of Solon, and Alfred, and other founders of states. Our fathers have filled them. But there remains to us a great duty of defence and preservation; and there is opened to us, also, a noble pursuit, to which the spirit of the times strongly invites us. Our proper business is improvement. Let our age be the age of improvement. In a day of peace, let us advance the arts of peace and the works of peace. Let us develop the resources of our land, call forth its powers, build up its institutions, promote all its great interests, and see whether we also, in our day and generation, may not perform something worthy to be remembered. Let us cultivate a true spirit of union and harmony. In pursuing the great objects, which our condition points out to us, let us act under a settled conviction, and an habitual feeling, that these twenty-four states are one country. Let our conceptions be enlarged to the circle of our duties. Let us extend our ideas over the whole of the vast field in which we are called to act. Let our object be, OUR COUNTRY, OUR WHOLE COUNTRY, AND NOTHING BUT OUR COUNTRY. And, by the blessing of God, may that country itself become a vast and splendid Monument, not of oppression and terror, but of Wisdom, of Peace, and of Liberty, upon which the world may gaze, with admiration, forever !

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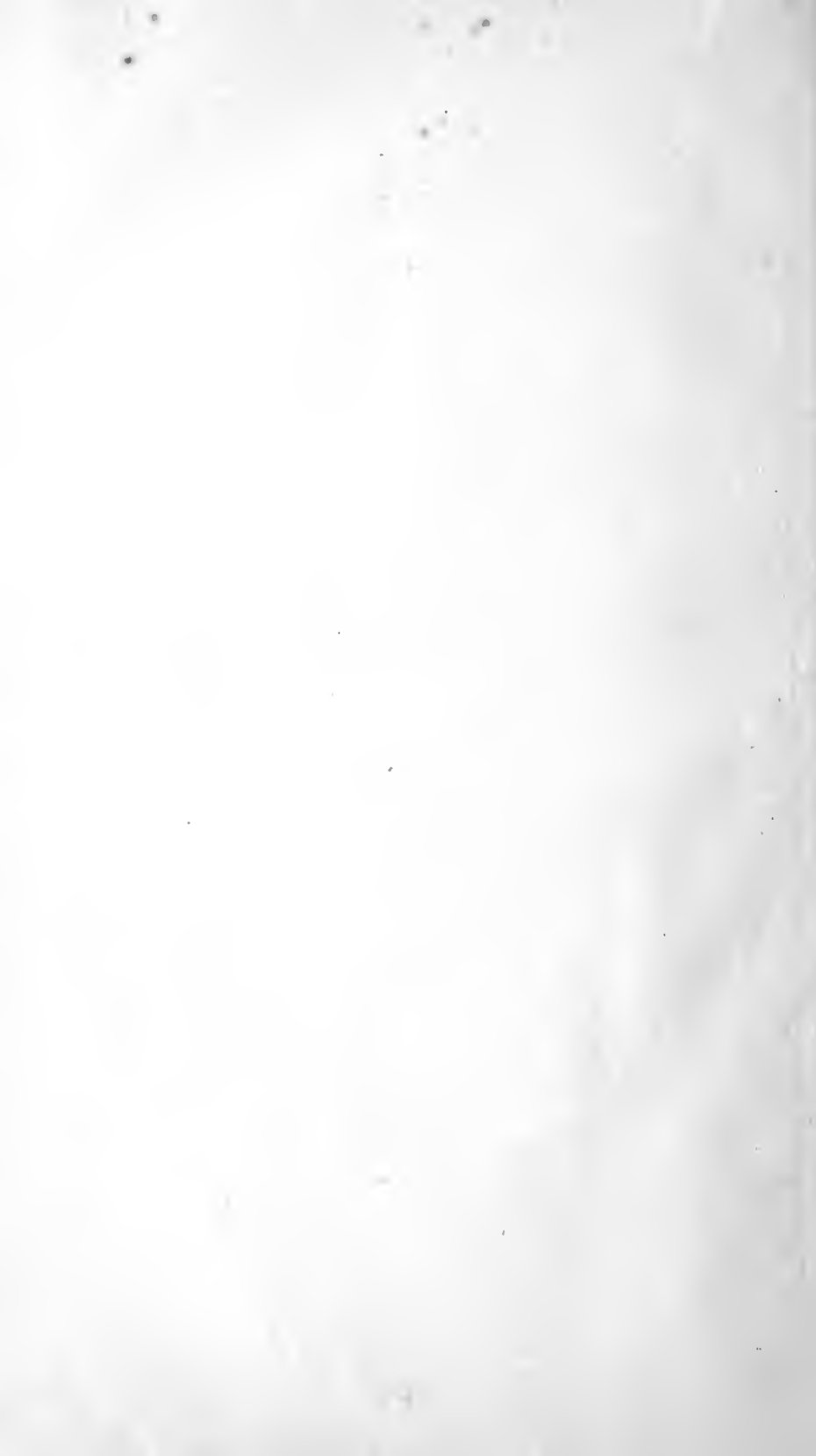
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